

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Groups and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani
Lucille Schacht

DATE: July 16, 1998

RE: Consumer Evaluation of CRT Programs in Vermont

The attached page (two-sided) summarizes the results of our recent survey of consumers served by Community, Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) programs for adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses in Vermont.

If you would like a copy of a full report, that includes more detailed results, and a description of the methodology of the study, please call Pam Mack (241-2639).

We look forward to your comments about this survey and your interpretation of the results. Please send you e-mail to pip@ddmhs.state.vt.us, or give one of us a call.

Consumer Evaluation of Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs in Vermont Project Overview and Summary of Results

During the fall and winter of 1997, the Vermont Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services asked consumers of services to evaluate Vermont's Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) programs for people with a severe and persistent mental illness. A total of 1,170 consumers contributed to this evaluation by responding to a mailed questionnaire that asked for their opinion of various aspects of these programs. The respondents include 50% of all people who received Medicaid reimbursed services from these programs during January through June of 1997. The survey instrument was a modified version of the Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program (MHSIP) Consumer Survey developed by a national multi-stakeholder work group. The Vermont consumer survey was designed to provide information that would help stakeholders to compare the performance of CRT programs in Vermont. These stakeholders, who are the intended audience for this report, include consumers, program administrators, funding agencies, and members of the general public.

Methodology

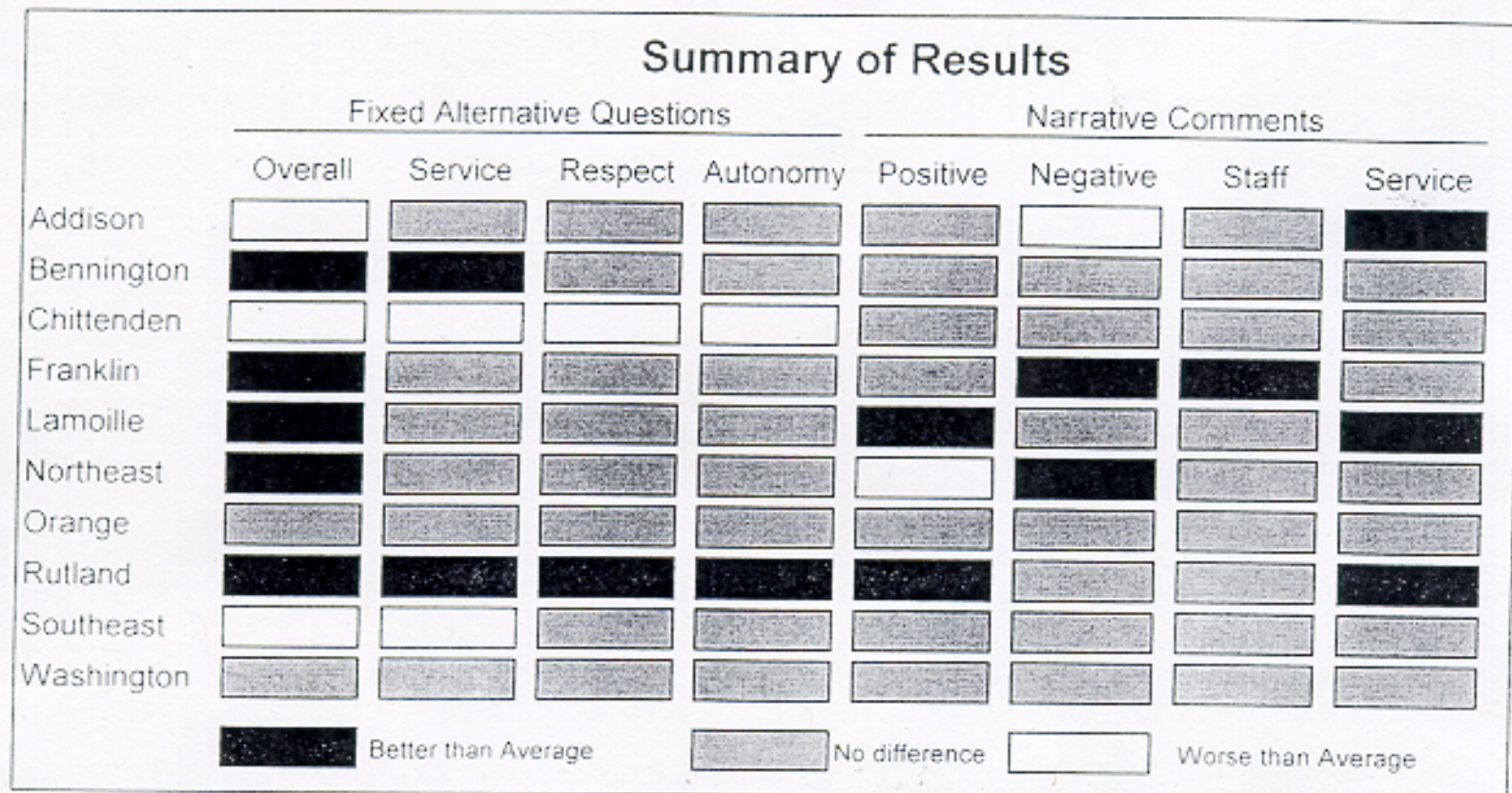
In order to facilitate comparison of Vermont's ten CRT programs, consumers' responses to twenty-one fixed alternative items and four open-ended questions were combined to form eight scales. Four of the scales were based on responses to fixed alternative questions. These scales focus on consumer evaluation of program performance *overall*, and with regard to *service*, *respect*, and *autonomy*. Four other scales were based on responses to open-ended questions. These scales include frequency of *positive* and *negative* comments about program performance, and the frequency of positive comments specifically about *staff* employed and *services* provided by the programs. In order to provide an unbiased comparison across programs, survey results were statistically adjusted to remove the effect of dissimilarities among the client populations served by different community programs. Measures of statistical significance were also adjusted to account for the large proportion of all potential subjects who responded to the survey.

Statewide Results

The majority of consumers of services provided by Community Rehabilitation and Treatment programs in Vermont rated their programs favorably. Statewide, 77% of the respondents evaluated the programs positively. Some aspects of program performance, however, were rated more favorably than other aspects. Fixed alternative items related to *services*, for instance, received more favorable responses (77% favorable) than items related to *respect* and *autonomy* (73% favorable). *Positive comments* about program performance were offered by 87% of the consumers, but 56% had *negative comments* about program performance. Consumers offered positive comments about *staff* and *services* in about equal numbers (47% and 46% respectively).

Program Comparisons

In order to compare consumers' evaluations of Vermont's ten Community Rehabilitation and Treatment programs, consumers' ratings of individual programs on each of eight composite scales were compared to the statewide average for each scale. The results of this survey indicate significant differences in consumers' evaluations of the state's ten CRT programs.



The Rutland CRT program received the most favorable consumer assessment in the state, scoring better than the statewide average on six of the eight scales. The CRT programs in Franklin and Lamoille counties scored better than average on three of the eight scales, and Bennington scored better on two scales.

Consumer evaluations of four other programs were mixed or neutral. The CRT programs in Washington and Orange counties were not different from the statewide average on any of the scales. Northeast was rated better on two scales but below the statewide average on one scale. Addison was rated better on one scale but below the statewide average on two scales.

Consumers rated two programs lower than the statewide average. The CRT program in Chittenden County was scored lower than the statewide average on four of the eight scales. Southeastern Vermont was scored lower than the statewide average on two of the eight scales.

The results of this consumer evaluation of CRT programs in Vermont need to be considered in conjunction with other measures of program performance in order to obtain a balanced picture of the quality of care provided to people with a severe and persistent mental illnesses in Vermont.

To obtain a copy of a more complete report of the results and the methodology of this study, contact Pam Mack (802-241-2639). For more information contact John Pandiani, Chief of Research and Statistics, Vermont Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, Vermont 05671-1601 (802-241-2638) jpandiani@ddmhs.state.vt.us